(a) whether it is a fact that Coal India Limited has recently increased the prices of all its products by 10 to 15 per cent;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that prices were also increased in December, 2007; and

(d) if so, the percentage of this price rice and increase in production during the years 2007-08, 2008-09 and so far in the first half of the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Run of Mine (RoM) coal prices in all coal companies of coal India Ltd. (CIL) other than Eastern Coalfields Ltd. (ECL) and Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. (BCCL) have been increased *w.e.f.* 16th October, 2009 by 10% for all grades of coal over the them existing prices and the increase in respect of coal produced by ECL and BCCL is 15%, except for the portion of Raniganj coal of grades A and B from such mines of ECL which are supplied under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to specific consumers at special prices.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The prices of coal had earlier been revised by CIL in December, 2007 *w.e.f.* 13.12.2007. RoM coal prices for all coal companies of CIL other than North Eastern Coalfields (NEC) were increased by 10% for all grades of coking and non-coking coal over the then existing prices and in case of NEC the increase was 15%.

The rate of increase in production in CIL during 2007-08 and 2008-09 was 6.4% and 8.8% respectively. The rate of increase in production during the period from April 2009 to Oct. 2009 was 8.77%.

Reforms in coal industry

1833. SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that coal industry is moving towards a big reform and is readying to usher-in an open bidding regime;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government is likely to bring a legislation for appointment of a Regulator to open up coal mining to private players without restriction of private use; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) With a view to bring greater transparency and objectivity in the process of allocations of coal blocks, the Mines and minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2008 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 17.10.2008, which seeks to adopt auctioning of coal and lignite blocks for captive use through competitive bidding as the selection process.

(b) and (c) A proposal for setting up of an independent regulatory body for coal sector is

under consideration of the Government. Since setting up of regulator involves enactment of legislation by the Parliament, it may not be possible to indicate the exact time frame for the same. Within the extant legal framework, appointment of an independent regulator for coal sector would result in more optimal development and conservation of coal resources, more effective regulation, adoption of best mining practices, rational pricing, better distribution, evolution of a more competitive market etc. It would also help in creating a level playing field for new entrants in the coal sector.

Import of coal

†1834. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to import coal during 2008 and 2009;

(b) if so, the quantity of coal imported/ to be imported;

(c) the name of the country and price at which it was imported/to be imported;

(d) the reserved stock of coal in tonnes in the country and the production of coal during the above mentioned period; and

(e) the extent to which the shortage of coal in domestic sector would be met as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) to (c) As per the present import policy of the Government, coal can be imported by any entity under Open General Licence (OGL) on payment of applicable import duties. Coal India Ltd., has not been importing coal directly so far.

(d) The total closing stock of coal with CIL as on 01.04.2008 and 01.04.2009 was 45.59 mts and 47.72 mts respectively. The production during 2007-08 and 2008-09 was 379.46 mts and 403.73 mts respectively.

(e) During the year 2007-08 and 2008-09, the shortage of coal was met by imports by the end users which were 49.79 mts and 59.00 mts respectively.

Use of railway racks by MCL in Talchar coalfield area

1835. SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd. (MCL) is encouraging movement of coal by railway racks even within short distances, say within a radius of 100 km. from Talchar;

(b) what is the number of displaced/ substantially affected persons who are earning a livelihood by transporting coal by road in Talchar coalfields area; and

(c) considering the distress which would be caused to the DPs and SAPs of Talchar area, whether Government would consider directing the MCL authorities not to use railway racks within a radius of 100 km from Talchar?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.